**Applied for:** English/English Literature

**Offers received:**

Durham University – AAB

University of Exeter – AAA (AAB with firm)

University of York – AAA

Lancaster University – ABB

Why does literature that is centuries old still resonate with 21st century readers? What
intrigues me is how little some things have changed.

I particularly enjoy reading 19th Century Gothic fiction as I find the Romantic influences of
nature and the sublime used in parallel with the influence of scientific and social
developments makes me question moral boundaries, as well as appreciate these works as pieces of art. My interest in this genre began when studying Frankenstein at GCSE, as I was intrigued by Shelley's use of the epistolary and frame narrative structure of the novel due to how a text's structure can affect the reliability of a narrator's point of view. I also explored the
epic poems that Shelley uses for intertextuality within the novel: Paradise Lost and The Rime
of the Ancient Mariner. I found that Paradise Lost in particular enabled me to feel more
sympathy for the creature as I found myself sympathising with Satan, another outcast. I did
not cease to explore Frankenstein after I finished my GCSE; I still continue to further my
knowledge of the novel by reading critical essays and developing my own ideas as I felt there was more I wanted to explore, such as the concept of the doppelganger. I am so captivated by this novel's ability to transcend time: in an age when I believe the line between
transgression and progress is increasingly blurred, viewing Frankenstein as a cautionary tale
against careless transgression is potentially even more relevant to the 21st Century. I am
also interested in the way the novel questions the nature of society through the creature's
experiences; a similar question is raised in The Picture of Dorian Gray, which I loved for its
haunting narrative wherein the importance of appearances is also questioned.
When exploring Marlowe's Doctor Faustus for A Level Literature, I found it fascinating how the combination of the dark representation of a descent to hell was combined with comedy when representing Faustus' downfall. Due to my interest for the play, I discovered Goethe's Faust and was surprised by the differences and similarities when two writers explore the same idea.

My other subjects are influential in aiding my study of literature. I have a keen interest in
History, because an in depth knowledge of the circumstances surrounding an author and their work is pivotal in comprehending the motivations behind a text. It also illuminates how texts intertwine with the context of when they were written to provide the author's own outlook on society through a particular lens. My love of literature feeds into my studies in Fine Art, where I chose Literary Illustration as my coursework title, exploring symbolism within texts and representing their key messages through art. Adding to my own knowledge base, I explored symbolism and imagery in Hamlet, such as using the contrast of Hamlet's dark to pale clothing to represent how Shakespeare creates a parallel between him and the ghost. This work furthered the way I perceive literature as an insight into the past, humanity and as an art form.

I am keen to share my passion for novels with others - my volunteering in a charity bookshop
for the past year allows me to frequently advise customers dependent on their preferences.
Also, for my role as a senior prefect I mentored younger students in their English lessons,
assisting students that found English challenging and using my own skills to develop theirs.

University will give me the chance to explore my passion for literature by giving me the
platform to be surrounded by others who share my interests for debates in literature.
Afterwards, I envision myself entering academia as a teacher, so I aspire to gain as deeper an insight into literature as possible, especially pre-20th century literature as I continue to
seek to understand how modern society has been shaped by the past.